

## Message Text

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63

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SCS-03 L-03 PRS-01 SEC-03 RSR-01 RSC-01

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P 292330 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3614

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, EFIN, CS, BF

SUBJ: VESCO CASE

REF: STATE 57322

1. LA NACION REPORTED MARCH 29 DETAINMENT MARCH 27 OF MARLISE SIMMONS AND ALAN RIDING. REPORT SAID THEY WERE PICKED UP BY CIVIL GUARD FOR PHOTOGRAPHING AMBASSADOR'S EX- RESIDENCE AND DETAINED BY THE COSTA RICAN SECURITY AGENCY. THEY WERE DETAINED TWO HOURS INCOMMUNICADO. LA NACION'S REPORTER WAS TOLD THE TWO HAD NOT BEEN ARRESTED, BUT HELD TO DETERMINE " THE REASONS THEY WERE TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS". WHEN THE REPORTER INQUIRED IF TAKING PICTURES WAS PROHIBITED, THE POLICE REPORTEDLY REPLIED " IT DEPENDS ON WHAT THEY WANT THE ( THE PHOTOS) FOR". THE PRESS REPORT IMPLIED THAT THE JOURNALISTS WERE FREED AFTER THEY EXPLAINED THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE WAS AWARE OF THEIR PRESENCE AND THAT THEY HAD A SCHEDULED INTERVIEW MARCH 28 WITH PRESIDENT FIGUERES. WITH THE REPORT, LA NACION RAN ITS OWN PHOTO OF THE HOUSE TAKEN FROM THE PLACE THE JOURNALISTS WERE PICKED UP.

2. ARLISE SIMMONS SPOKE TO EMBASSY OFFICERS AFTER THE EPISODE. SHE CONFIRMED THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF LA NACION REPORT ( SEE PARA 5 BELOW) BUT DISMISSED IT LIGHTLY, SAID SHE WAS SURPRISED THAT IT HAPPENED. SHE  
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REQUESTED NO ASSISTANCE FROM THE EMBASSY. SHE SAID SHE KEPT HER FILM BY HIDING IT ON HER PERSON, BUT DID NOT SAY SHE WAS SEARCHED. MS. SIMMONS SAID SHE HAD INTERVIEWED THE GARDENER AND MAID AT AN ADJACENT HOUSE. SHE SAID THEY TOLD HER THIS HOUSE IS NOW OCCUPIED BY " VESCO' S PILOTS", ONE WHOSE NAME SHE GAVE PHONETICALLY AS " KACHNER". SHE ALSO SAID SHE HAD LEARNED THAT VESCO HIMSELF IS PRESENTLY IN SAN JOSE AND LIVING IN ANOTHER HOUSE RELATIVELY NEAR THE HOUSE SHE PHOTOGRAPHED.

3. THE EMBASSY HAS NO INFORMATION CONFIRMING VESCO' S CURRENT PRESENCE HERE OR ABOUT ANOTHER HOUSE WHERE VESCO MIGHT BE LIVING. THE TWO JOURNALISTS WHILE IN SAN JOSE SPOKE TO BOTH THE EMBASSY' S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OFFICERS, AN ARRAY OF COSTA RICANS CONNECTED WITH VESCO CASE, AND RAUL ESPINOSA, VESCO' S PUBLICITY AGENT HERE. SIMMONS ALSO SAID SHE HAD RECEIVED SEVERAL REPORTS, ONE FROM A SOURCE CLOSE TO THE COSTA RICAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY' S INVESTIGATION OF VESCO' S ACTIVITIES, THAT THREE SEC OFFICIALS ARE NOW IN COSTA RICAN LOOKING INTO THE COSTA RICAN SIDE OF THE CASE. WE, OF COURSE, TOLD HER THE EMBASSY HAD NO KNOWLEDGE THAT SUCH OFFICIALS ARE IN COSTA RICA.

4. ANOTHER SOURCE TOLD THE EMBASSY TODAY THAT PRESIDENT FIGUERES, DURING HIS INTERVIEW WITH SIMMONS AND RIDING, TOLD THEM HE WAS SORRY THEY WERE PICKED UP, BUT ADDED THEY WERE THOUGHT TO BE PART OF THE CONTINGENT OF " SEC DETECTIVES" WHO ARE IN SAN JOSE LOOKING INTO THE VESCO CASE.

5. THE EMBASSY LEARNED TODAY THAT THE REPORTERS WERE NOT IN FACT HELD BY THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL SECURITY AS REPORTED BUT AT THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY.

6. COMMENT: THE BRIEF DETAINMENT OF THE TWO REPORTERS IS NOT CONSIDERED HIGHLY UNUSUAL IN COSTA RICA DURING PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS. UNLESS NEW CIRCUMSTANCES COME TO LIGHT, THE EMBASSY CONSIDERS THE CASE CLOSED.  
LANE

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Status:** <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980107  
**Subject:** VESCO CASE  
**TAGS:** EFIN, PGOV, BF, CS  
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